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**TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
February 7, 2023**

SB 929 An Act Expanding School Meal Programs to Provide Free School Meals to All Students

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) offers the following comments regarding SB929.

Although the goal of providing healthy, nutritious, and delicious meals to all students is a worthy endeavor, we are concerned that SB929, as written, proposes to make school districts in Connecticut bear the financial burden for implementing this program.

The proposed bill requires boards of education to establish and operate school lunch programs for public school children while removing a district's ability to charge for any such school meals. For many districts, this puts the burden on them to make up the difference between federal funds received from the National School Lunch program and the cost of their school meals programs. Depending on the district, this gap could be significant (i.e., over a million dollars). These funds would need to come from the operating funds from their district budgets. This bill, as written, would create a new unfunded mandate for school districts at a time when they are dealing with many other priorities. Consequently, the state must provide funding to implement such a proposal if it were to become law.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important matters.

About us: The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials throughout the State of Connecticut. School business officials work closely with school boards, school superintendents, administrators, staff, public officials and communities; and we are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but is not limited to, overseeing school budgets and operations.

